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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



[*The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.*]

A PLEA FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

DEAR EDITOR: I have been a reader of the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING from the first issue, have been very much interested in your editorials, and have learned a lot. In your description of the different kinds of nurses who are the great problems of the nursing profession, you leave the Pharisee nurse until the last, calling her the worst,—there is one class much more to be despised and dreaded, who is wrecking the profession although she pretends to be working for its best interests,—I refer to the political wire puller, who is growing more in evidence every day.

Many new fields are opening to nurses, which they are urged to enter, and the private duty nurse starts out to see what she can do, not knowing the conditions. A nurse who has put in ten years of hard work, that have been a credit to herself and her school, may go up for examination and find herself in competition with a woman who has been an attendant, without a day of real training, who yet stands a better chance because she has a politician behind her, and the political wire-puller who examines the papers must please the politician to whom she owes her own position.

Training schools are looking for the best class of women for pupils, but the applicant leaves a home and circle of friends where she has been respected and finds that from first to last during her training she is under the big stick rule. If she takes up institution work after graduation, she employs the same methods that have been used with her,—hence the Pharisee nurse. The pupil seeking private duty continues under this treatment to the end. No matter how much she is instructed in her duty to her profession, she knows the same women who held the big stick over her manage all the public affairs of nursing. She is so anxious to get away from such ruling that she goes her own way, works up her own clientele, and very soon does not register at her own school. The doctor knows her worth and keeps her busy. When asked why, she replies, "No more big stick for me."

When the Associated Alumnae was started it was stated that it was an organization for the private duty nurse, but for some years past it has been almost impossible to elect a private duty nurse as delegate to the annual meeting, for the wire-puller wants to keep the big stick rule. The argument always is that we must send some one who can represent us well. A superintendent is sent. She cannot represent the private duty nurse, possibly she has never been one herself, but the wire-pullers get together and she has a fine trip, expenses paid by the membership, and the same situation continues. It has always been hard for the private duty nurse to take part in organization work, for when she gives her time, her income stops, while the superintendent's salary goes on just the same.

The cry of all the alumnae associations is, Why do not the young graduates come in? Why this wave of indifference? It is not a wave of indifference but a quiet demonstration that the private duty nurse is no longer under the wire-puller or the big stick. The labor unions treat their members better and respect their rights. The leaders of the nursing profession are the last to wake up to the fact that outside of the particular job they are paid for they have no more rights than the last graduate. It is hard to understand why such intelligent women do not show more respect for the rights of others. The private nurses who are quietly ignoring the wire-puller and the big stick are like children who have grown up in spite of their parents.

ALWAYS A PRIVATE DUTY NURSE.

STERILIZATION IN THE HOME

DEAR EDITOR: I take great pleasure in reading the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* and look forward each month to the new number. I am a private duty nurse and would like to know some of my sister nurses' methods of sterilization of goods in private homes.

In preparing for an operation in a private house when the surgeon does not bring his own sterile goods a great responsibility rests with the nurse.

May I hear from some of you?

A. M. L., '09.

TALKS TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

DEAR EDITOR: Your suggestions are very helpful, and though I have been kept from giving the talks I wrote you of, on sex questions, etc., I hope to be able to work up to it some day. I feel that I don't want to "rush in where angels fear to tread," so am gathering the material with which to saturate myself, as you suggest. I shall watch with interest what may come out from time to time in the *JOURNAL* regarding this subject.

The last *JOURNAL* was a particularly helpful one to me, the articles all being so very practical and up-to-date, and that's what we most need, it seems to me. I do not know which article appealed to me most, *all* were so good. We all want to know more and more concerning infantile paralysis, so I was very glad of that article, also the one on pneumonia.

I am always glad too of suggestions for the entertainment of the convalescent children. I usually try to get them to manufacture as many of their own playthings as possible. We've made our own checker boards, etc.; and the puzzle games are easily made. The pasting of pictures on cardboard, or paste board, and cutting into irregular shapes is very easy and proves enticing often—oftentimes more easy than the later fitting together of pieces.

I have had two patients with deep fissured nipples who have suffered untold agonies while nursing their babies. I think perhaps—am hoping—that the fault lay in that care of nipples was not started early enough. One who is pregnant again is starting in early with the simple cleanly care—using something to soften any secretions at night, and washing with soap and water in the morning. Do you think she should use anything to harden them? Some authorities say one thing and some another.

M. T. M.